













By E. P. Abraham

DAVID WILSON:

Penicillin in Perspective  
298pp. Faber and Faber. £4.95.

It is now nearly half a century since Alexander Fleming observed the production of penicillin by a mould, *Penicillium notatum*, in the inoculation department of St Mary's Hospital. His observation aroused only minor interest in medical circles and remained virtually unknown to the public for more than ten years. Yet by 1943 he had become a subject for hagiography and found himself thrust upon him; and since 1945 there have been at least ten books for the English-speaking public which profess to tell the story of penicillin. Why should a further book be being contemplated? One of David Wilson's aims in *Penicillin in Perspective* was to assist in the burial of a myth. Another was to write a story with greater breadth than his predecessors and a sequel to cover more recent events.

Fleming was a research worker who would have left his name in bacteriology even if penicillin had never been used in medicine. In 1922 he discovered the bacteriolytic enzyme, lysozyme, while examining the microbial flora of his nasal secretion. He encountered penicillin in 1928 during a study of various forms of staphylococcal organisms which cause local and deep-seated infections. A convincing analysis by Ronald Hare (*The Birth of Penicillin*, Allen and Unwin, 1970) has revealed that only by extraordinary good fortune were conditions in the laboratory such that this discovery was made. But, also by good fortune, Fleming was a man who had the curiosity and began the time to explore unexpected phenomena not obviously related to the mainstream of his work. His great contributions to chemotherapy were the preservation of the mould, the recording of the antibacterial activity and low toxicity of the material in which it had grown and the suggestion that penicillin might be useful as an antiseptic. His discoveries could not have been commissioned by finance and state science with freedom for some in research to wander where their fancy takes them.

## In the same vein

By Andriana Ierodakonou

WALTER FAGEL:

New Light on William Harvey  
189pp. Basil. Karger. DM. 86.

Walter Pagel's contribution to Harvey studies is characterized by inspired imagination and sound scholarship. This combination of aptitudes, as great as it is rare, has, in the period of over two decades during which Dr Pagel has occupied himself with the subject, served to provide a richly detailed portrait of a "historical Harvey". Dr Pagel's own term for Harvey, seen in the light of various intellectual trends of his time, and thus seen in correct historical perspective, is Dr Pagel's solution: the Harvey of the "biological revolution". This is a term which has been used by many of the various scientific and literary aspects of Harvey's scientific thought and shown themselves up to a coherent whole. Thus Harvey's scientific and literary aspects are seen in the light of the "biological revolution" and the "biological revolution" is seen in the light of Harvey's scientific and literary aspects.

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Nevertheless, Fleming did not show that penicillin could cure systemic bacterial infections. Indeed, the idea that it might do this when introduced into the blood stream does not seem to have entered his mind, even after the sulphonic acid esters had been found to be effective in the treatment of diseases caused by streptococci, such as puerperal fever, which had previously been always dangerous and often fatal. He might have done experiments in mice, using penicillin prepared by two colleagues, P. Ridley and S. R. Craddock. Instead his personality and his environment caused him to lose interest in his discovery.

The events which changed penicillin from a subject of minor bacteriological interest to one of clinical importance and public concern occurred in the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, Oxford, in 1940 and 1941. They stemmed from a decision by H. W. Florey and E. B. Chain to initiate a study of anti-bacterial substances known to be produced by micro-organisms. This idea had its origin in Florey's lifelong interest in Fleming's lysozyme. The project was regarded as one of academic interest for which grants might be obtained, and was not motivated by the expectation of results of clinical value, or connected with the imminence of war. Penicillin was only one of several substances chosen for investigation. But work by a small group of people on its production and isolation was marked by a degree of success that had eluded others. With penicillin experiments in mice impure, enough material was prepared, through Florey's drive, to show that it had therapeutic powers in man far exceeding those of the sulphonamides.

It was then not long before stories began to appear that revealed abysmally low standards in scientific journalism. The ball was set rolling in 1942 by Fleming's chief, Almroth Wright, talented, opinionated, who was used by Bernard Shaw as a model for Sir Colenso Ridgeon in *The Doctor's Dilemma* and was no stranger to the joys of controversy. Following his reference to penicillin in the *Times*, which short leader in *The Times* which left the workers uneasy, Wright wrote to place a laurel wreath on Fleming's brow, on the principle "palmarum qui merita ferat". When the press sought enlightenment in Oxford,

Florey told his secretary to "send them packing" and escaped through a back door. In later life Florey showed skill in public relations. But his reaction at the time sprang from a deep-seated aversion to personal publicity and a belief that no good could come of advertising the therapeutic powers of a substance that was still only available in trivial amounts. In contrast, Fleming, despite his apparent shyness and inability to communicate, showed no reluctance to meet journalists and broadcasters. He acquiesced "with almost perverse amusement" at the growth of the myth that he was a man of vision who had foreseen the true potentialities of penicillin but had been frustrated by lack of chemical help. Perhaps he came to believe the myth himself.

A visit by Florey and Heatley to the United States in 1941 was followed by a wartime Anglo-American collaboration and massive contributions by the American pharmaceutical industry to the technology of penicillin production which made the substance widely available by

1946. Yet a few years later it seemed that the benefits to medicine of a great discovery might well begin to diminish, for new strains of bacteria were emerging that produced a penicillin-destroying enzyme, penicillinase. However, new discoveries were to come. The production of the nucleus of the penicillin molecule by the Beecham Group made it possible to make penicillins with new side-chains. A substance whose nucleus resembled that of penicillin in some respects, but differed from it in others, was discovered in Oxford during an academic study of penicillin produced by a fungus of the genus *Cephalosporium*, that had been isolated from the Sardinian sea. This substance was the forerunner of a series of cephalosporins that found clinical use as penicillins and cephalosporins have since been used by other and greatly increased ability to cope with infections by antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

The commercial aspects of all these developments now form an intricate pattern, but some of them

are linked with the National Research Development Corporation, set up in 1948 to exploit inventions in the national interest. In its handling of the cephalosporin project, the corporation clearly fulfilled its purpose, for it negotiated agreements with pharmaceutical companies in Europe, America and Japan which were highly favourable to the one British firm, Glaxo, to show serious interest at the time. Nevertheless, there were times when the project seemed about to founder. That it did not do so was due in no small measure to Eli Lilly and Company, an American licensee.

David Wilson's account of the way in which unexpected findings in academic laboratories led to a revolution in the treatment of bacterial infections and the foundation of a serious attempt to construct a graphic and literary history are evidence of a serious attempt. And he has been able to find his way in areas where assertions have been so conflicting and sometimes emotionally charged that it has never seemed possible to write a history of penicillin which would be pleasing to all of those concerned in its making.

## Defending the Middle Ages

By Rupert Hall

PAUL LAWRENCE ROSE:

The Italian Renaissance of Mathematics  
Studies on Humanists and Mathematicians  
from Petrarch to Galileo  
316pp. Geneva: Droz.

The very word "renaissance" carries its own overwhelming presupposition. Pierre Duhem's challenging of the word (so far as science is concerned) opened, at the beginning of this century, a debate still unsettled. After seventy years, however, it seems certain, whatever reservations one may retain about the extreme claims of the medievalists, that those of the Renaissance humanists were equally invalid. It is simply untrue that all medieval translations of Greek scientific works were made useless by the ignorant mistakes of translators and copyists; that the liberal arts and especially the mathematical sciences had been in neglect throughout the Middle Ages; or that all medieval learning had been taken on the "character of a dream or empty fable". Nor (we are con-

fident now) were the scholars and mathematicians of Islam deserving of the scorn and abuse which Renaissance scholars like Ruggiomanus or Servetus visited upon them. Humanists invented the stereotype of medieval barbarism which mathematicians, philosophers and physicists aplenty extended to their special fields. The last age had not had such a catastrophe; the last age had read Socrates rather than Plotinus; therefore its learning was despicable.

Since such a judgment is everywhere rejected now, it is perhaps curious that the scientific writings of the early Renaissance have not been subjected to closer scrutiny. (One exception is Leonard Scardi, *Copernicus, Vesalius, whose effect*, in any case, was hardly early, while cataloguing them, does Paul Lawrence Rose attempt any sustained analysis or assessment of their authors' typically Renaissance self-importance? Consider briefly the case of Peter Ramus, *Geometria*. This book was of course early translated into Latin, and again (directly from Greek) for Aquinas's *Summa* by William of Moerbeke. But medieval astronomers did not study the *Almagest*, and this is the Renaissance eyes were their great aim. Recovery of the Greek *Almagest* and its re-translation in a mathematically literate form, became a chief objective. As Dr Rose relates, a new version of the Greek was commissioned from the Greek George Trebizond by Pope Nicholas V. in 1451 which (in ways not specified by Dr Rose) was accused of "serious errors". George himself attributed the criticism (and consequent loss of papal favour) to the envious of James of Cremona (described as an "excellent mathematician", he translated Archimedes).

Although this supposedly poor translation had some circulation, it was unknown to the first technically trained astronomer of the Renaissance, Georg Purbach, though the latter, unlike Purbach, learned Greek and worked on the original *Almagest* under the tutelage of the great Cardinal Bessarion. Though a native man, he too failed to produce a new Greek or a new Latin text; when the *Almagest* was first printed (Venice, 1515) it was, after all, in a medieval Latin version. More telling still is Dr Rose's judgment (correct, I think) that the most important book influencing Copernicus was Ruggiomanus's *De Revolutionibus* (1498), which is the *Almagest* in preference to the *Almagest* even after the publication of the latter in Latin. The entire fifteenth-century textual emphasis on the Greek *Almagest* proved to be a dead end.

The fate of other Greek mathematicians was not dissimilar. Pappus appeared before 1550, and only Tarantius' poor, "medieval" Archimedes is a pleasant scholarly pursuit to make the ownership of a great deal of the fifteenth-century passion for amassing rare Greek scientific manuscripts brought little good fruit—until some derivative Code was compiled, printed years later. How ingenious the passion could be! Happenings by Cosimo de Medici's employment of forty-five scribes to copy 200

manuscripts for his San Marco library in twenty-two months. It is a pity that Dr Rose, an almost frighteningly learned young man, should have taken a narrow view of the scholarship of his subject. His book is rich in information about what people read, what they wrote, and what they believed, but it is not when and how they believed, including Copernicus (who spent several years among the Italian mathematicians) and Galileo. But he tells us little (save in the most vague terms of "improving astronomy" or "correcting medieval errors" about what people wrote in their books, or what their object might be in writing them. He does little to help us understand the concept of the Renaissance, to define more accurately the medieval-Renaissance antithesis, or to understand what the medieval contribution to modern science was (in Renaissance scholars' eyes it was nil). What does he mean by the sentence "One of the most important restorers of mathematics, Niccolò Tartaglia (1500-57), was also one of the last influential"?

Dr Rose seems content to traverse Renaissance Italy, following the threads without asking big questions or venturing a big interpretation. One of the best aspects of his book is its treatment of the Urbino school of mathematicians—Commendino, Guidobaldo del Monte and his nephew, Federico Commandino, the revival of the late sixteenth century with which (following Alexandre Koyré) he couples Galileo, once Guidobaldo's protégé. Nevertheless, it is too soon to say that the Renaissance was a "renaissance" of astronomy had occurred in the fourteenth century, which in his time needed to be "restored" in its turn, to remind us of the difference between the sixteenth-century notion of renaissance and our own embedded as the latter is in the idea of progress. As a restorer of Greek mathematics, Tartaglia played a cavalier and distinguished role—he is remembered as a creator of new mathematical ideas.

A. MacGee's *Harvey's Adventure in Medical Research* (1964pp. Johns Hopkins University Press) is a supplement to the *Journal of the History of Medicine*, and describes the past "century of discovery" at the University of Medicine, edited by Harry Kahn and John Jarrett (1959pp. Elek, £12.50). It is a more general work, which sets out to tell the dramatic moments of recent medical history, such as the "quest of infection" and "the kidney and organ transplantation". The two books differ in approach as well as in content. Through the Johns Hopkins book concentrates on the people responsible for the hospital's accomplishments, it is not an institutional history; it includes, however, an interesting chapter on the hospital's medical education, on people who were both active and passive as a wider readership, and is copiously illustrated; each section begins with a short history setting its subject into a wider context.

## The high tide of neglect

By Bruce Boucher

STEPHEN FAY AND PHILLIP KNIGHTLEY:

The Death of Venice  
190pp. André Deutsch. £4.25.

ARNOLD WHITTECK (Editor):

Ruskin's Venice  
325pp. George Goodwin. £7.50.

It is perhaps emblematic that *The Death of Venice* should have been written by two correspondents of *The Sunday Times* and not by an Italian journalist. The decay of Venice, like the destruction of much of Italy's cultural and environmental heritage in the past few decades, emphasizes how important a national forum can be for galvanizing protest. Although it is a capital, Italy remains a highly fragmented, regionally oriented country with little national feeling. This and the absence of a tradition of investigative reporting may help to explain why, ten years after the alarms were sounded, the future of Venice is as doubtful as ever. It is very much to the credit of Stephen Fay and Phillip Knightley that they have persevered with their investigation of the struggle for and over Venice and that they have produced such an informative and generally balanced account of it. Their story is all the more chilling because it does not focus upon mere greed and corruption or expose a few individuals as evil incarnate; rather, the main enemies are the indifference, inefficiency, and ignorance of a bureaucracy state when faced with the conflicting demands of environment and economy. The *Death of Venice* performs a useful service by explaining why successive governments of varying political hues have done so little for Venice when outsiders were willing to do so much.

so punitive as to discourage many would-be applicants. The picture is not all black, of course. The struggles of individuals and of international groups are recognized and praised. They range from the late René Mahou of the Venice Biennale, and the American Colonel James Gray, whose antipathy to pigeons and the press often obscured his achievements as a fund-raiser, to Roberto Frasson, the major proponent of the mobile closure system for the lagoon, who vainly sought a compromise between untrammelled expansion and economic stagnation. Against a generally gloomy background, their accomplishments and those of a few others stand out in splendid isolation.

Anyone who knows Venice well may find points of disagreement with *The Death of Venice*, chiefly, perhaps, with the conclusion to the chapter on stone restoration where the authors write: "The problem of stone in Venice, the most comprehensive work of architectural art in the world, was no longer a scientific problem; it was known what caused stone to decay. Nor was it a technical problem; it was known how to clean and conserve stone. It was a personnel problem. The number of restorers who would agree that the technical problems are solved must be small indeed. Personnel is certainly part of the problem, but even more serious is the use of obsolete or harmful techniques. *The Death of Venice* gives, known to require two years for a

ample evidence of this. Two of the city's most conspicuous monuments, the facade of the Cà d'Orto and the church of Santa Maria del Miracoli have suffered notable damage from improperly conducted restorations. In two other cases, the church of San Nicolò dei Mendicanti and of the Gesuiti, the results were bapting but in large measure due to the chance presence of expert volunteers. The story of the Gesuiti is illustrative of many others. The church's altar wall was gradually falling into a canal, and an attempt was made to counter this by driving concrete piles into the foundations. As the restoration was being carried out, a retired American engineer named Macconoff offered his services on the site. He began by conducting his own survey of what was causing the eastern wall to give way and found that it was the combined force of the large baroque altar and the four columns around it which also supported the ceiling of the church. Astonishingly, while the original contractor's report had taken the altar's weight into account, it had neglected the force of the columns, actually some six times greater than that of the altar. The funds available to Save Venice, Inc., the American foundation supporting the restoration, were not enough to accommodate Macconoff's eagerness, and the restoration proceeded largely upon the original report. Thus the Gesuiti may need another radical intervention in the not too distant future.

The conservation of free-standing sculpture is equally controversial. At the Cà d'Orto statues have been restored at a rate of ten a year while a laboratory in Brussels is known to require two years for a

single statue. Many scholars would probably sympathize with the view put forward by Wolfgang Wolters, superintendent of monuments in Bavaria and long a friend of Venice. In a recent letter to *The Burlington Magazine*, he argued that statues should be brought inside to protect them from air pollution; that they should be restored as best as possible; that they should be replaced by copies; and that they should be kept indoors "all scientific methods of stone conservation are more efficient". Venice's problems must be dealt with now. Sadly, the rivalries between the various bodies engaged in restoration work, limited funds, and a lack of skilled personnel have created as many problems as have been solved. Better administration and the introduction of standards of restoration would eliminate some of the worse activities that have passed for conservation. Venice lacks an exact inventory of its work of art; no survey or master plan exists; many of its monuments exist. While restorers and private foundations concentrate on the more glamorous aspects of Venice, many of its palazzi are allowed to disintegrate beyond the point where drawings or photographs can be made. Greater pressure must be brought to bear to ensure that a portion of available funds is spent on the restoration of popular housing; otherwise, the native population will continue to dwindle, and the restorers will have played an unwitting part in transforming Venice into a very large museum.

The appearance of *The Death of Venice* now, just before the Italian government reconsiders the regulation of the lagoon's waters, is timely. The book shows how meagre the fruits of the past ten years have been and it is a plea for action, again, a movement to place the restoration of Venice under an international body like Unesco. In a year that has witnessed an inconclusive national election, the devastation of Trieste, the loss of Sesto, and the run on the lira, hopes of progress in the salvation of Venice must seem bleak indeed without greater international effort.

John Ruskin did more than any other Englishman to spread the gospel of Venice. He was also the earliest and most dedicated champion of its architecture, and his writings as well as the soberest critic of its "grotesque" Renaissance. He poured out his prejudices and passions in *The Stones of Venice*, that most personal and engaging book about Venetian architecture and its importance, the absence of a compact or abridged modern edition of *The Stones of Venice* is surprising. Arnold Whittick's *Ruskin's Venice* was designed to fill this gap, to preserve the old, saying there's no substitute for the original.

Essentially, he has reprinted Ruskin's annotated index to *The Stones* with some amplification from the body of the text and occasional editorial notes. As an introduction to Ruskin, the solution is neither a very happy one nor does it promote him as a serious writer on Venice. The full measure of Ruskin lies in the chapter, not the paragraph. Snippets tend to emphasize his crankiness and make the book seem, if one may borrow from Oscar Wilde, like *Arms, Literature, and Dogma* with the literature left out. The introductory remarks treat Ruskin's principles of criticism very inadequately, and Mr Whittick's use of Ruskin's critical vocabulary often leads to misleading statements like "the Church of the Gesuiti... was built in 1730-40 in the late Renaissance style". Given Ruskin's celebrated loathing of the railway, Mr Whittick's laudatory remarks on the station at Santa Lucia (it is in the modern idiom... visually pleasing and does not strike an inharmonious note") seem doubly incongruous. As a practical guide to Venice, the book lacks evenness and reliability. How much better if one could have an abridged Ruskin in one hand and Hugh Honour's *Guide* in the other.

## Space for confinement

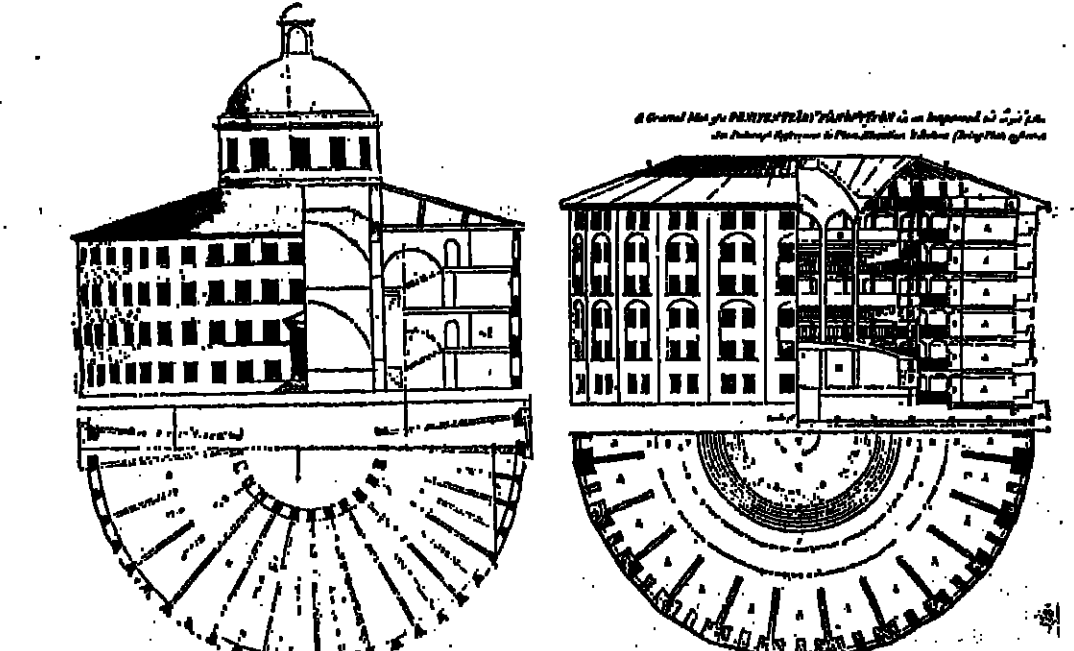
By Quentin Hughes

UNITED NATIONS SOCIAL DEFENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE:

Prison Architecture  
An International Survey of Representative Closed Institutions and Analysis of Current Trends in Prison Design  
239pp. Architectural Press. £30.

There is no love affair between authors and subject. Even the opening statement is apologetic: the authors would have preferred to have written something else. Nevertheless it is an important subject for, although the examples show a universal conservative attitude to incarceration, the guidelines drawn up are areas where the pros and cons of social reform are more hotly argued.

The dilemma has often been debated. How can a closed institution designed to retain its prisoners in security and exclude outsiders not display those harsh characteristics which in the past tended to make it more like a fortress than a home? How can community involvement, which is essential if rehabilitation is successful, be reconciled with such a closed and strongly guarded institution? Crime is still perceived and judged at two distinct levels—the rational and the emotional—and the criminal is both a human being who deserves humane rehabilitative treatment and, at the same time, an enemy of society. The housing of this individual is thus an acute architectural problem both in functional and symbolic terms. The public is already confused about the symbolism of many modern buildings. What qualities would it be desirable to have in a prison? It is not possible, even if it were desirable, to separate the external architectural expression from the internal appearance for, with many exceptions, the outside of a prison must both appear to be strong and be capable of withstanding assault from both inside and out. One of the problems is highlighted in the United Nations Consultative Group Report of 1961 which suggests that authorities could either go for defence in depth, largely replacing high perimeter walls with a green area which kept permanently under surveillance so that prisoners could see the outside world, or, by providing the maximum perimeter defence, to allow a more relaxed atmosphere inside this perimeter. However, the situation is rapidly changing and in the case of the political prisoner, a wall designed to resist the capabilities of an escaping prisoner may be quite inadequate to cope with an attempt to release him by outsiders armed with explosives or helicopters. Although it is still unlikely that, except in highly organized crime, a non-political prisoner will be actively supported from the outside, for it is not worth the risk, more and more societies are preoccupied with political incarceration and the symbolism of many modern buildings. What qualities would it be desirable to have in a prison? It is not possible, even if it were desirable, to separate the external architectural expression from the internal appearance for, with many exceptions, the outside of a prison must both appear to be strong and be capable of withstanding assault from both inside and out. One of the problems is highlighted in the United Nations Consultative



Jeremy Bentham's design (left) for a panopticon, a circular prison surrounded by a chapel; and a more ambitious design for a six-storey building—from Prison Architecture.

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Boeswell Reid on the Houses of Parliament and St George's Hall in Liverpool at about the same time. The introduction and the summary are printed in three languages, but the bulk of the text and the most interesting article on the history of prisons in English, although the contributors are drawn from a number of European countries. Two thirds of the book are taken up with an international survey of prison design which consists of a series of over-acted plans and sections submitted by various national authorities and apparently chosen at random. In each case there is a useful small-scale key layout but one is left in doubt about the general purpose of being a prison. Curiously it is intended to be an "ideas" book, or a "do-it-yourself" prison architectural guide? The plans are printed in a variety of scales and are undated so that they give the impression of being a collection of master plans. One also wonders why the extraordinary format was chosen—too bulky to be read on the lap, too heavy for most coffee tables. Perhaps it was designed to be supported on the robust furniture of prison libraries for contemplation. The book would be a useful addition to the collection of a prison library, or to provide nostalgic memories for retired prisoners. At half the size and a third of the price it could have been a useful

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**By Alan R. H. Baker**

acorns such as those and from seeds sown by the same Brown and Derwent will be grown a luxuriant forest of local geophytes. Most have concerned with the recognition of perceived environments following Wright's stimulus-response concept, and with evidence and false signs and hypotheses—and the role it played in human thought and behavior. The environment is perceived experienced comparatively; a place is viewed and compared with other places, with other and with other persons' notions of the same place at the same time. Any

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## visions of the

are remarkably few efforts made in this book to evaluate or to approximate, let alone precise, comparison with work by others in the field. Historical geography, the American view of the latter, is highly non-quantitative in character. Changing attitudes are illustrated most closely by Bowden, *et al.* who, in a chapter on 'systems' before ignoring it, and Mackay computes some of the characteristics of cometary names. All assume some intuitive, sixth-

tempting. Unless interdisciplinary  
looks such as these are fully  
explored and unless more explicitly  
comparative analyses of collected  
studies towards landscapes are  
conducted, studies in historical  
geopolitics will not be looked  
upon as seriously as they should  
not be—used as building blocks in the construction  
of scholarly citadels; they will be  
mentally enjoyed but soon  
forgotten. Finally, it should be  
very clear that this book is about  
geographies in the mind rather  
than about geopolitics of the mind.  
The geographical approach could  
possibly encompass a geography  
of the mind, but it is not a  
geography of itself, of space, of time  
or death, of anything.

A "sentimental" treatment of love was not the only innovation with which the novel confronted its readers. Its use of the past, in a disguised and transformed but still recognizable by those who had shared it, was without precedent. The great and wealthy Chia household, portrayed with such loving detail in the novel, represented the author's own family, the Ts'ao's who basked in imperial favour for more than half a century until, in 1728, when the author was still a boy, they were disgraced and stripped of all they had. Written years later, when he was living in poverty near Peking, the novel can be thought of as a gigantic exercise

Possibly because it was based on real events involving a former emperor and was therefore thought too dangerous to print (Chinese

**By David Hawkes**

If the English reader has to take the novel's greatness on trust, it is because the complete text of it has never yet become available in an English version. A complete English version would be more than 90,000 words long, that is, about the same length as *Les Chénobios du temps perdu*, or three times as long as *War and Peace*, or half as long again as *The Tale of Genji*. There are abridgments. Chichewang's *Dream of the Red Chamber* (the longer 1958 version) is far and away the best. But abridgment removes the delectable meandering

According to the origin myth with which Ts'ao Hsueh-ch'in half-jokingly introduces his novel, his boy-hero Bao-yu is really the incarnation of a celestial stone, the only one left over out of many thousands which the goddess Nü-wa used to repair the broken sky with ("the stone which the builders rejected"). Dai-yu, his unlucky heroine, is the reincarnation of a celestial flower, which the stone watered, and which therefore owes him a "debt of tears". The stone appears on earth in the form of an egg-shaped jade

Professor Plaks, if I understand him, would disagree with this. The two levels of the novel, he says, are always complementary. Accordingly the two symbolically expressed relationships just mentioned should not be thought of as equally "valid." As Ts'ao Hsien-ch'ang himself soon to appear when, in Bangkok, in Chapter 1, he gives him in the preface to *Disillusionment* the address, sister, Two-in-one. Tragedy in the novel—and in the Chinese tradition generally—says Professor Plaks, comes from a failure of perception (not of action) rather than from a failure of action or of will.

mology we have found at the heart of Western allegory. More accurately, the characteristic Chinese solution to the problem of duality is of another sort altogether. This solution, in brief, consists in the coupling of the given universe within which the conceivable opposites of sensory and intellectual experience are contained, such that the poles of duality are seen as complementary within the entire structure of totality.

The term that he uses for this Chinese dualism is complementary duality. A complementary expression of it may be found in the famous

I find this concept of Professor Plaks a very fruitful one. His development of it in this book has produced many invaluable insights. It is when he gets on to the second of his two main archetypes, the interlocking cycle of five "elements" or "forces"—earth, wood, metal, fire, water—which he calls "multiple periodicity," that he comes

I begin to part company. His suggested table of equivalencies in which Dai-yu is "wood", Xi-feng "fire" and Ban-chai "metal" (gold) looks to me like structural criticism at its most fustianous. The same could be said elsewhere of his attempt to supply the sky-mender Nü-wa with a mare in order to relate her to the creation-myths in Wen I-to's well-known study.

By far the longest, most successful and most interesting section of the book (Chapter 5 *seg*) is devoted to the allegory of the Garden. There enclosed world of the *Dream* is constructed like Chinese boxes: there is a small garden within the Garden, the Garden is freedom, youth and beauty; outside it is the adult world with all its fraud and malice. A Garden's inhabitants grow up and learn to get away from the Garden in Bao-yu's garden, spoiled and end up by becoming like the rest. Professor Plaks's exploration of this allegory, his comparison with various allegorical gardens of Western literature (the *Chanson de Rose*, the poems of Chaucer, the *Divina Commedia*, the *Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*), his study of allegory in general and of Chinese garden literature in particular are remarkably wide-ranging and illuminating.

In the extremely difficult task he has set himself, that of explaining an Oriental classic to Western readers in the World Library series, Professor Plaks has deliberately avoided the biography-and-background approach so successfully exploited by the late Ivan Morris in his delightful *World of the Shining Prince*; indeed, he sidesteps the vexed question of authorship altogether by referring to the work as "the *Shining Prince*," thus treating the 12th-century version as a single unit. I would be unreasonable to complain that he has not done what I think he set out to do; nevertheless I think there are problems even within the purview of his analysis which biographical and background studies might profitably contribute to illuminate. For example, the religious as well

Take for example his "Vicious Circle" article in the movie. What is its significance? Is it to be attached to them? A little information, such as Chou Ju-ch'ing gives in his later study, about intellectual fashions among the princely and aristocratic survivors of Yang-meng's purge might shed some light on the article. And some information on the special status of virgins in Manchurian families could conceivably increase our understanding of the garden allegory. It seems unlikely that to consume a Redologist as Professor Hsueh takes him should be to ignore such matters. Perhaps he is saving them up for another volume.

**By Clive Hart**

**MICHAEL SEIDEL :**  
Epic Geography  
James Joyce's *Ulysses*  
Maps drawn by Thomas Crawford  
265pp. Princeton University Press  
£10.10.

Victor Béarar, seeing in the Odyssean migratory and commercial life in the Mediterranean, offered in *Les Phéniciens et l'Épique* (1907-03) a detailed reconstruction of the poem's conceptual and topographical origins. In Michael Seldén's Greek colonial expansion resulted in an etiological travelogue, a unique narrative variety in which joyce's history in "narrative" Joyce who wished between his Seattle and Boston, his speculation, was powerful, suggested to the implied reader, that the implied reader.

creative fantasy in historical and geographical reality. Brannan stressed not only the interdependence of the two but the necessary priority of fact, a causal sequence which suited Joyce, for whom the physical world emphatically existed and whose imagination needed the stimulus of the remembered scenery of his native Dublin. Writing as Stephen would have wished to write, he developed the possibilities of a "middle way, the ideal" and form-filled art that is factual and form-filled at base but visionary in process.

In looking upon visionary processes as emanations from an essentially common centre of mundane observable life, Joyce placed himself firmly in a tradition older than that of some of the younger explorers of narrative form with whom it has become fashionable to associate him. Mr Seidel is right to insist that "there is a real texture to the spaces of *Ulysses* that always precedes dialectic."

from Joyce's spontaneous sympathy with Bérard, are profitably explored by Mr Seidel. The same

Still more important than Mr. Solfeld's undoubted success with matters of Homeric fact is his exploration of Joyce's partial dependence on the visionary element in Bérard. The *Odessey* is "an extension and a return, a commerce in the unknown and the familiar" a complex series of confrontations of East and West, light and dark, civilization and barbarism, with Ithaca, the point of initiation and return, situated at one of the impredicable boundaries between the two *Odyssies*, heading

between the two. Odysseus begins and ends by participating in both worlds, and Mr Seidel has many illuminating things to say about the parallel participation of Bloom. In dealing with the idea of the *nostos*, the return to an uneasy equilibrium, he makes better sense than most have done of the familiar uncertainty in the resolution of *Ulysses*. Since the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm between the journey of personal

exploration and the national epic are more important as Mr. Seton's argument progresses, it is regrettable that the later chapters of *Epic Geography* should be weakened by an unconvincing and muddled piece of special pleading which attempts to show that Joyce considered the *nostos* of *Ulysses* to begin not with "Eumeus" but with "Cyclops."

**World, wor**

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**By D. E. Pollard**

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**JAMES J. Y. LIU:**  
**Chinese Theories of Literature**  
1970. Chicago University Press. \$

This is not a history of Chinese literary criticism. Very competent histories have been composed by Kuo Hsiao-yun and others. What James Liu's intention is not repeat in English what has been written in Chinese on the subject. His data is largely supplied by those authors, but he elaborates in his own words a schema for the theories of literature covering the relationships between university writer, work and reader, in which are fitted the separate messages of metaphysical, epic, lyric, expressive, technical, aesthetic, and dramatic theory he sets up.

Chinese metaphysical thought was devised to explain the nature of literature, and make Chinese claims for its status in the world plain. The most simply by distinguishing the different approaches: one accommodated itself to Confucian society, the other stemmed directly from the writer's sense of communion with some numinous power or presence and found its backing it needed in the Taoist ideas of *Yin* and *Chuang Yu*. The first had to take account of ancient cosmology, the establishment of earth of cultural forms consonant with the music of the spheres, ordering of human society, particularly the invention of written symbols. Linguistically, the focus of expression was the word.

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Chinese metaphysical thought developed to explain the natural structure, or make ultimate claims for the validity of the explanation, most simply by distinguishing the different approaches: one accommodated itself to Confucian acculturation, the other stemmed directly from the writer's sense of communion with some numinous power or presence and found what backing it needed in the Taoism of Li Tzu and Chuang Tzu. The latter had no rake account of ancient cosmology, and no sense of the earth of cultural forms consonant with the music of the spheres, or ordering of human society, particularly the invention of written symbols. Linguistically, the focus of *acculturation* was the

wen, which by the time the first treatises on the subject of literary criticism were written, the word had acquired a range of meanings charted by Liu as "marking pattern — embellishment — culture — learning — writing literature". Down the ages orthodox critics of an aesthetic would attack the aspect of pattern, embellishment, beauty in language, while those of a practical turn of mind would prefer to notice the aspect of culture, hierarchy and social harmony. The other two aspects, the spiritual and the mystical union with Tao of nature, may be represented by the expression which Liu picked out, *ju shen*, which means either "entering into the spirit" (of objects or scenes) or "entering into the realm of the spiritual", made possible by "emptying the mind", so as to give play to so-called supra-rational faculty. The relationship between writer and universe

so affected Liu! is able to classify the Chinese, by contrasting the Chinese, with the West (later influenced by Ch'an Buddhism) with European nihilism and phenomenological theories.

From metaphysical theories passes by way of deterministic expressive theories, that is, theories based on the expression of the writer's feelings and personal feelings. Readers conversant with European romantic thought will find much that is familiar here, though there are some peculiarly Chinese factors involved, too, such as the concept of "vital force" which in this context is particular to the individual and carries the impress of the author's figure again in the next section where it is approached.

the other direction, in the way manifests itself in palpable things such as rhythm and diction, and therefore becomes accessible through analysis. This capturing of chi and the elaboration of rules and standards of taste, however, are classified "reasonably enough" as "technical theories", but the question is, are they "theories of literature" or "literary theories"? Lu's evident lack of interest in the first direction in interpreting them more narrowly and exclusively than believe the majority of them to be. True, their exponents did concentrate on mechanics, but that could not be said of all of them. Theories of style and metaphysical elements.

This is probably the kind of objection which Lu anticipates. His introduction when he says that in order to make his argument more convincing, he will bring Chinese criticism into community of world criticism, isolating examples which fit in "universally valid categories" admirable, and which are not to be categorical, as those on the theme of "literature as a vehicle of the 'Way' dealt with in the chapter on pr

matic theory, all is plain sailing but the sharper the distinction made between categories the more accommodation there is both to those tidy people who discuss things at a time (without intending their view to be a theory of literature)" and for those who people who cross back and forth over theoretical demarcation lines. Despite its brevity and occasional peremptoriness, the schema unfolds and the highly original mind of its author makes this book which all future students have to take into account.

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NADA PUBLISHING











# The intermittences of the quill

By Douglas Sealy

VALENTIN IREMONGER:  
Horn's Field and Other Reservations  
80pp. Dublin: Dolmen. £1.75.

NICHOLAS LONGLEY:  
Man Lying On A Wall  
48pp. Collanz. £2.50.

HUGH MAXTON:  
The Noise Of The Fields  
43pp. Dublin: Dolmen. £1.55.

CHARAN CARSON:  
The New Estate  
42pp. Belfast: Blackstaff. £1.50.

When Valentin Iremonger was thirty-two, back in 1950, he published his first book of poems, called *Reservations*. The forty-one poems in that book have been reprinted here, with the addition of sixteen later poems and six translations; it is, in effect, his first book again, for the intervening years have not been productive, he writes:

Ten bloody years with this quill  
Almost idle on my table, I have  
The narrow summers go, the winters  
Awaiting always, seized in a cold  
The genetic word, the arrogant  
The sour mockery of that last line  
is the fruit of the diffidence and  
very self-awareness of the younger  
poet. In 1950 Iremonger was the  
Irish Prufrock—not so sophisticated,  
not so well dressed, younger, certainly  
and more interested in girls, but  
equally flawed by an inability to  
accept anything at its face value and  
equally self-conscious, with the  
added disadvantage of a heart upon  
his sleeve.

Mr Prufrock was probably  
unaware of, and unaffected by, the  
coming of spring, I not so Mr Iremonger:  
Spring steps—suddenly like  
Glass under a door, squeaking and  
glittering,  
I put my hand to my cheek and the  
Of my fingers feel blood pulsing  
and quivering.

But despite this exuberant opening  
the poem sees some uncomprehending  
chorus "it springs" "ragtime  
garden path" promises "freedom  
from my facile fears". April is the  
cruelest month because it reminds  
the poet of the passing of time and  
the irreversibility of each moment:  
Mr Iremonger's *Reservations* are a  
dirge for the happiness that youth

feels it ought to have but has never  
found, for youth would like to believe  
"happiness as other than  
being well deceived".

Mr Iremonger writes with gusto,  
despite his mournful themes; he  
uses long lines in big stanzas, frequently  
with rhyme, and flourishes  
his adjectives and unusual words; his  
approach is a far remove from the  
short laconic poems that are fashionable  
today.

Michael Longley's *Man Lying on a Wall* might almost be a photograph  
album of a family holiday in  
this country: the poet is seen swimming,  
plunging a goose, carrying water,  
admiring a view, sailing, etc.  
—some of the poems are like extended  
haikus where natural objects  
are seen with clarity and affection,  
but Mr Longley is seldom content  
just to describe, he allows the  
reader to make connections between  
the objects of the poem and the  
feelings they arouse. It is as if the  
photographs were each supplied  
with a caption that sought to turn  
a snapshot into a statement. For  
instance, the attractive conceit that  
a man's wife is his doctor cannot  
support the reminiscence of Greek  
myth and the unexpected rephrasing  
of a cant saying:

At this be my check-up:  
Heart at home on my chest  
To number the heartbeats,  
Fingerprints or your eyes  
telling in the wrinkles  
and folds, and your body  
weighing now my long bones,  
In the palm of your hand  
my smallest future:  
Because if they read to  
The children would eat me—  
There's no such place as home.

I fall to see the point: the profanity  
seems sham.

Nowadays poets don't like to be  
thought of as writing light verse,  
though it is a respectable genre,  
with a long history. The poem of  
Mr Longley's collection describes  
a man, dressed in a city suit complete  
with bowler hat, lying on a  
wall, and wondering whether he's  
alone, and wanting to go somewhere.  
His briefcase, containing papers  
and other people's voices, lies discarded  
on the ground beneath. Mr  
Longley, writes of this curious little  
figure: "The man lying on the wall  
was waiting, between sleep and  
waking, dream and reality, fact  
and fiction, freedom and responsibility,  
life and death." He might  
be between many other opposites,  
but Mr Longley's remark sounds like  
the category of high seriousness.  
The poem is a homage to L. S. Lowry;  
if Lowry has painted a man  
he saw, or imagined, on a wall,  
a man lying on a wall and nothing  
else, the lack of any message would  
be as plain as the man. It is difficult  
to be sure whether or not Mr  
Longley's most innocent and charming  
snapshots are not concealing

some message: I can enjoy the picture  
but am worried about the captions.

Hugh Maxton's poems in *The Noise of the Fields*, with some  
exceptions, are baffling. There is  
a moving elegy for his father, some  
powerful fourteen-liners about  
banked-down violence, many  
graphic phrases—"soft grass  
flayed us as we slept"; "the brick-  
work of the warm ruins where we  
make our home"; "an elaborate  
quadrille of thorns and honey-  
suckle"—but in the other poems I  
do not see what he is driving at.  
Take the long and ambitious "Mast-  
rim: A Meditation". It seems to  
be partly about the opposition  
between landowners and tenants in  
the large estates of the Edwardians  
in the British Islands; an unidentifiable  
"he" and "she" are  
actors and observers, and  
with a surrealist concatenation of  
emblems of desertion. But what is  
to make of "no urchin hedge-  
climber in the gravel"? What is  
the point of describing a tennis  
ball as "a globe passing between  
two tensions"?

Two poems, "much amended"  
are included from an earlier col-  
lection. The amendments have  
tightened them and made them  
denser—more packed with meaning  
and more difficult to understand.  
The author, instead of coming to  
meet the reader, has moved farther  
off. One would like to say to him:

Rhyme and reason

By C. H. Sisson

DONALD DAVIE:  
*Articulate Energy*  
173 pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
£3.95.

It is now twenty-one years since  
*Articulate Energy* appeared.  
For this new edition Donald Davie  
has written a postscript looking back  
on the work of a man in his early  
poems. By that time he already  
had some reputation, both as a poet  
and as a critic. He was prominent  
in that famous "Movement", and  
his first book of criticism, *Purity of  
Diction in English Verse*, had been  
published.

A label hung round a writer's  
neck, and, early in his career, he  
was an old one; but it may,  
one imagines, be a nuisance  
more easily than they follow the  
work. The residue of *Articulate  
Energy*, is, anyway, not an occasion  
for reviving dead partisanship. For

obscurely is too easy: take the risk  
of being understood. After all, he  
can write clearly and well, as in  
"De Profundis".

The fossil fish is pale; we mined  
Just forty minutes out from the  
hotel.

We thought it deadlier than the  
dinosaurs, an empty collar  
abstraction. Which proved an  
error.

Below the dreaming tropic lies a  
chill  
region flattened by thirty gravities;  
and water there is thicker than  
blood.

small and lucid as a lens which is  
the sum of what it sees. History's  
rude  
moralities are rammed down on us,  
the teething boasts that we live  
in the present.

We rise with bursting bodies and  
the placid statisticians on the  
ground.

Claran Carson ends the title poem  
with a question, *The New Estate*,  
... What could they be for, those  
Tollet fixtures, the silence of water  
beds,  
That book of poems you bought  
yesterday?

Now much of the collection is a  
loving recollection and recreation  
of a way of life—"Interior  
with a Weaver"; "Linen"; "An  
Early Bed"; "At the Windy Co-  
1914"; "Country Cousin". There  
are reproductions of old wood-  
cuts showing stone-masons at  
work, and glass-blowers; a  
maypole, a toilet fixture, and a  
board of some thing with a  
favourite eye. And what poetry  
would they read? Rod McKuen  
W. B. Yeats? And what could  
be for, with their "dedication to  
a life of loving money"? What  
could Goethe and Rilke be  
when their readers ran to the  
factory answer to such questions  
assuming that the books were  
just wallpaper or table-furniture,  
unless it is that poetry is for  
the mind, with words and rhythm  
as its tools.

East Winch, Iolbeach,  
Clenchwater, Hancham:  
They squelch and rasp like things,  
coarse-grained syllables  
disputing every inch  
back from the Wash.

Such rough Saxon music is rare  
from the Irish countryside, as is  
the later nineteenth century, psychology  
has modelled itself on those suc-  
cessful natural-science metaphors  
whose disorder it had decided to  
build its mansion, and had suffered  
the consequences thereafter.

I can recall my early dark  
thoughts. Little question, to begin  
with, that the most powerful impact  
on common sense had come from  
Freud. Yet Freud was, and is,  
peripheral to and grossly atypical  
of academic psychology, so much so,  
indeed, that apart from providing  
cautionary methodological tales with  
which to warn the unwary under-  
graduate, his work is not even cov-  
ered in the Oxford syllabus. Or take  
it another way: has psychology  
affected issues of public concern  
which a citizen reasonably be ex-  
pected to have a bearing, say econ-  
omics? Here, surely, is a powerful  
mode of thought and of policy-  
making that treats psychological  
matters like risk, preference,  
delayed gratification, so much so,  
indeed, that even proposer notions  
like utility through which the values  
and probabilities of outcomes are  
assumed to combine to determine  
choice. Yet though economics had,  
in the lifetime of official psychol-  
ogy, been through the revolutions  
of Marshall, of Keynes, of  
Schumpeter, and of Morgenstern  
and von Neumann, there is not a  
trace of any influence exerted by  
psychologists. A minor exception,  
perhaps, is in the application of  
psychology to industrial relations  
—a not altogether successful ven-  
ture at that, and one also suffi-  
ciently peripheral to psychology to  
be ignored (perhaps deservedly) in  
the syllabus of most major uni-  
versity departments.

And finally, since I do not wish  
to make too much of my initial  
gloomy thoughts, let me remark  
on the strange fact that in recent  
years, the most conspicuous public  
voice of psychology has been  
radically Utopian and reductionist,  
motivated by the assertion that  
scientific psychology shows that  
the human enterprise is a stagnat-  
ing, unproductive, and unenrich-  
ing one, and that it would be  
better managed by human  
engineers than by law, and that  
when ordinary people acted human  
they were muddled by notions like  
choice, freedom, dignity, intention,  
and so on. Goals, goals, goals, the  
B. F. Skinner in his Herbert Spencer  
Lecture two years ago, implied  
indeed that human affairs so con-  
ceived could be shown to be  
"wrong" in much the same way as  
Copernicus had shown that the helio-  
centric universe was "wrong".

My winter of discontent did in-  
deed lead me to explore the impact  
of psychology on common sense—  
and vice versa—but it led me also  
to look more deeply into what might  
be the interface between "ex-  
port psychology" on the one side  
and the common-sense views of man  
on the other. I was drawn to a  
disturbing conclusion on the matter  
of why experiments or academic  
psychology had not had more of  
an impact on the broad cultural  
conception of the nature of man or  
why, perhaps, its contribution had  
been negatively reductionist. It was  
that that psychology had not yet  
found out enough; was not empiri-  
cally advanced enough to enter the  
debate with authority. Rather, it  
was the stronger conclusion that  
psychology had initially defined its  
task in such a way that it could  
never have had much of a direct  
impact, given the nature of its con-  
cepts of explanation. Its initial con-  
cept of explanation, its initial con-  
cept of research were not fitted to  
the kinds of processes or patterns  
that shape human affairs as they

persist into other fashions. He  
calls Thomas's procedure, explaining  
"a pseudo-synonym".

formally correct, his syntax  
cannot mime, as it offers to do,  
a movement of the mind...  
these sentences that seem to drive  
forward through their very in-  
coherence, to be nothing more than  
fact do to be nothing more than  
fact. The analysis is without mercy, he  
with reason.

That the metaphors could in fact  
be broken down into successive  
meanings is irrelevant; even  
when the breaking down has been  
done for us, we cannot hold on  
to it when we return to reading  
the poem.

That is one form of aberration.  
Another, less protuberant, and in-  
dicating a certain impotence in the  
face of reality, not a desire to treat  
it with contempt, is to be found in  
that poetry which is "invested",  
as at the end of *The Waste Land*,  
or in much of Pound's *Cantos*, where  
the poet does without not just of  
conventional syntax but any syntax  
at all, though never, Professor Davie  
thinks, "without loss". The closing  
lines of *The Waste Land* certainly  
do not come among the most effec-  
tive in the poem. Probably the effect  
attempted in that conclusion is too  
complex for an investigation of this  
structure, but there is no reason why  
such structures should not be used,  
if they are not asked to bear more  
than they can. Sometimes it is  
enough to point.

If there is a dogmatism behind  
this inquiry, it is a belief in the  
importance of poetry.  
Symbolist theory and practice  
saw the poem as a closed  
system of meanings, without re-  
ference to the work of art, had  
they been able to do so at an appropriate  
moment of literary history, but the  
theory is too tenuous, contains no  
skeleton of reality, to be more than  
a passing thought. Indeed all theories  
of poetry—even the most august of  
symbolist poetry—its limitation—must  
always give way before the achieve-  
ments of poetic practice. Moreover,  
the pretensions of poets have  
always given way before the more  
life-what is imitated, in short.  
Poetry is a criticism of life but,  
even more profoundly, life is a  
criticism of poetry. There is no  
other. Therefore, any attempt  
to isolate poetic activity, and to  
judge of poetic activity, from  
any of the other concerns of the  
human race (and the human race  
has some) is bound to lead to more  
or less foolishness. For poetry is  
"a matter of the human race".  
This is not a novel contention; but  
perhaps it is one of those things  
that cannot be said too often.

Quite so, and it follows that any  
theory which finds its way into  
human speech, however articulated  
or disarticulated, may find a place in  
poetry.

Easy does it,  
Easy, Easy—  
Easy does it,  
Easy, Easy—  
Just watch it, that's all—  
It's my neck on the block  
but it's your basket.

On the whole I find that in poems  
like this the cleverest things are too  
much the point. One is left with  
the feeling that something has  
been nearly done, and I should  
imagine they go down well at poet-  
ic readings—which is not to dis-  
parage them. They manipulate the  
audience with considerable skill.

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# Psychology and the image of man

By Jerome Bruner

One sometimes agrees to deliver  
a lecture on a set theme, only to  
discover that the theme is not quite  
what one had expected. Having  
agreed to deliver a Herbert Spencer  
Lecture on Oxford on how psychol-  
ogy had affected common sense  
about man or had itself been af-  
fected by that common sense—think-  
ing then that it would make an  
amusing summer interlude of  
historical writing—some dis-  
covered it would not go so  
easily. For once I had started  
on the inevitable first notes, it was  
plain to me that I was not embarked  
at all on a summer of intellectual  
history but on a much more philo-  
sophical, and only trivially  
historical—trivial in the sense  
that it was no surprise that, in the  
later nineteenth century, psychology  
had modelled itself on those suc-  
cessful natural-science metaphors  
whose disorder it had decided to  
build its mansion, and had suffered  
the consequences thereafter.

I can recall my early dark  
thoughts. Little question, to begin  
with, that the most powerful impact  
on common sense had come from  
Freud. Yet Freud was, and is,  
peripheral to and grossly atypical  
of academic psychology, so much so,  
indeed, that apart from providing  
cautionary methodological tales with  
which to warn the unwary under-  
graduate, his work is not even cov-  
ered in the Oxford syllabus. Or take  
it another way: has psychology  
affected issues of public concern  
which a citizen reasonably be ex-  
pected to have a bearing, say econ-  
omics? Here, surely, is a powerful  
mode of thought and of policy-  
making that treats psychological  
matters like risk, preference,  
delayed gratification, so much so,  
indeed, that even proposer notions  
like utility through which the values  
and probabilities of outcomes are  
assumed to combine to determine  
choice. Yet though economics had,  
in the lifetime of official psychol-  
ogy, been through the revolutions  
of Marshall, of Keynes, of  
Schumpeter, and of Morgenstern  
and von Neumann, there is not a  
trace of any influence exerted by  
psychologists. A minor exception,  
perhaps, is in the application of  
psychology to industrial relations  
—a not altogether successful ven-  
ture at that, and one also suffi-  
ciently peripheral to psychology to  
be ignored (perhaps deservedly) in  
the syllabus of most major uni-  
versity departments.

And finally, since I do not wish  
to make too much of my initial  
gloomy thoughts, let me remark  
on the strange fact that in recent  
years, the most conspicuous public  
voice of psychology has been  
radically Utopian and reductionist,  
motivated by the assertion that  
scientific psychology shows that  
the human enterprise is a stagnat-  
ing, unproductive, and unenrich-  
ing one, and that it would be  
better managed by human  
engineers than by law, and that  
when ordinary people acted human  
they were muddled by notions like  
choice, freedom, dignity, intention,  
and so on. Goals, goals, goals, the  
B. F. Skinner in his Herbert Spencer  
Lecture two years ago, implied  
indeed that human affairs so con-  
ceived could be shown to be  
"wrong" in much the same way as  
Copernicus had shown that the helio-  
centric universe was "wrong".

My winter of discontent did in-  
deed lead me to explore the impact  
of psychology on common sense—  
and vice versa—but it led me also  
to look more deeply into what might  
be the interface between "ex-  
port psychology" on the one side  
and the common-sense views of man  
on the other. I was drawn to a  
disturbing conclusion on the matter  
of why experiments or academic  
psychology had not had more of  
an impact on the broad cultural  
conception of the nature of man or  
why, perhaps, its contribution had  
been negatively reductionist. It was  
that that psychology had not yet  
found out enough; was not empiri-  
cally advanced enough to enter the  
debate with authority. Rather, it  
was the stronger conclusion that  
psychology had initially defined its  
task in such a way that it could  
never have had much of a direct  
impact, given the nature of its con-  
cepts of explanation. Its initial con-  
cept of explanation, its initial con-  
cept of research were not fitted to  
the kinds of processes or patterns  
that shape human affairs as they

persist into other fashions. He  
calls Thomas's procedure, explaining  
"a pseudo-synonym".

formally correct, his syntax  
cannot mime, as it offers to do,  
a movement of the mind...  
these sentences that seem to drive  
forward through their very in-  
coherence, to be nothing more than  
fact do to be nothing more than  
fact. The analysis is without mercy, he  
with reason.

That the metaphors could in fact  
be broken down into successive  
meanings is irrelevant; even  
when the breaking down has been  
done for us, we cannot hold on  
to it when we return to reading  
the poem.

That is one form of aberration.  
Another, less protuberant, and in-  
dicating a certain impotence in the  
face of reality, not a desire to treat  
it with contempt, is to be found in  
that poetry which is "invested",  
as at the end of *The Waste Land*,  
or in much of Pound's *Cantos*, where  
the poet does without not just of  
conventional syntax but any syntax  
at all, though never, Professor Davie  
thinks, "without loss". The closing  
lines of *The Waste Land* certainly  
do not come among the most effec-  
tive in the poem. Probably the effect  
attempted in that conclusion is too  
complex for an investigation of this  
structure, but there is no reason why  
such structures should not be used,  
if they are not asked to bear more  
than they can. Sometimes it is  
enough to point.

If there is a dogmatism behind  
this inquiry, it is a belief in the  
importance of poetry.  
Symbolist theory and practice  
saw the poem as a closed  
system of meanings, without re-  
ference to the work of art, had  
they been able to do so at an appropriate  
moment of literary history, but the  
theory is too tenuous, contains no  
skeleton of reality, to be more than  
a passing thought. Indeed all theories  
of poetry—even the most august of  
symbolist poetry—its limitation—must  
always give way before the achieve-  
ments of poetic practice. Moreover,  
the pretensions of poets have  
always given way before the more  
life-what is imitated, in short.  
Poetry is a criticism of life but,  
even more profoundly, life is a  
criticism of poetry. There is no  
other. Therefore, any attempt  
to isolate poetic activity, and to  
judge of poetic activity, from  
any of the other concerns of the  
human race (and the human race  
has some) is bound to lead to more  
or less foolishness. For poetry is  
"a matter of the human race".  
This is not a novel contention; but  
perhaps it is one of those things  
that cannot be said too often.

Quite so, and it follows that any  
theory which finds its way into  
human speech, however articulated  
or disarticulated, may find a place in  
poetry.

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occur in human societies: symbolic  
systems like language, conceptual  
structures in terms of which human  
beings carve up and interpret the  
world around them, and the cul-  
tural constraints imposed by human  
institutions were not within its  
terms of reference. These systems  
include everyday concepts like  
purpose, mind, responsibility, loyalty,  
even Cabinet responsibility—trans-  
mitted concepts that serve as the  
basis for human institutions like the  
law and economic exchange, insti-  
tutions which, so to speak, provide  
a buffer against individual varia-  
tion.

The founding contract of acade-  
mic psychology was such that, in  
the main, these matters were ruled  
out as belonging elsewhere, or,  
more accurately, as nothing but  
second-order phenomena to be  
derived from first principles. The  
larger edifice of human affairs, it  
was felt, would be elucidated by  
the stones that comprised it. We  
had, I believe, painted ourselves  
into a very tight











